

REMARKS

In line 10 on page 1 of the Office action the box indicating that the drawings are objected to is checked. However, it is assumed that, since no further discussion of a drawing objection is given, this is a typographical error.

Claim 11 was objected to because line 7 uses the word "configure" instead of "configuring." It is respectfully submitted that "configure" is grammatically correct in this instance, which can be seen when the word is read in context as "An apparatus ... comprising ... a control device to optionally configure the reminder alarm...."

Claim 11 was also objected to for the absence of the word "to" in line 10. This correction has been made.

Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 for lack of support of the phrase "said control devices." This phrase has been corrected to the singular, consistent with base claim 11. It is respectfully submitted that Claim 16 is now clear and definite.

Claims 16-20 refer to the "method" of claim 11 when in fact Claim 11 is an apparatus claim. This term has been corrected in Claims 16-20.

Claims 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 16 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by US Pat. 6,320,505 (Scott). Amended Claim 1 describes a method for notification of return of equipment having at least one function to a home station, comprising the steps of providing said equipment with an integral reminder alarm and reminder alarm timeout for return of the equipment to the home station, said reminder alarm timeout having a default timeout configuration; optionally configuring the reminder alarm timeout configuration at the home station; arming the reminder alarm timeout; and when the timeout expires, generating the reminder alarm from the equipment to return the equipment to the home station. Amended Claim 11 describes an apparatus for

notification that equipment having at least one function is due for return to a home station, comprising a reminder alarm integral to the equipment for notification that the equipment is due for return to the home station, said reminder alarm having a default timeout configuration; a timeout device; and a control device to optionally configure the reminder alarm timeout configuration at the home station, and arm the timeout device with the configured timeout, and when the timeout expires, generate a reminder alarm to return the equipment to the home station, said alarm generating according to the timeout configuration. An implementation of the present invention will help a home station assure that equipment it leases or loans out for a period of time is returned on time. The equipment has a reminder alarm which alarms when the equipment is to be returned, reminding the borrower or lessor to return the equipment. Since the reminder alarm is integral to the equipment, it cannot become separated from the equipment. The configuration of the reminder alarm timeout can be configured by the home station in accordance with the time when the equipment is to be returned, thereby accommodating loan or lease periods of different lengths.

The Scott patent describes a holder or rack for a VCR cassette which reminds the renter when to return the cassette so that the renter does not incur late fees. It is seen that the alarm is not integral to the equipment being rented, the cassette, but entirely separate, contrary to the claimed invention. The alarm must be set by the renter and cannot be adjusted by the cassette rental store, which is also contrary to the claimed invention. The Scott device is unreliable in that it is dependent upon timely action by the renter in order to operate correctly. For example, if the cassette renter gets home and forgets to put the cassette in the alarm rack until the next day, the alarm will be off by a day and the cassette will still be returned late. It is also not clear how the rack with its single alarm can accommodate multiple

cassettes as indicated by the multiple holders, as cassettes rented on different days would have different but overlapping rental periods. For all of these reasons it is respectfully submitted that Scott cannot anticipate Claims 1 and 11 and their dependent claims.

Claims 3 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Scott and further in view of US Pat. 5,283,546 (Scop et al.) Scop et al. describes a roadside emergency call box which powers up when the door of the box is opened and starts a timeout to put the box in low power operation if it is not used in a predetermined time period. It is not clear why one would combine the teaching of a roadside emergency call box with that of a VCR cassette holder, except for the claimed invention. Scott gives no indication that power conservation is an objective with his cassette holder, so there is no reason to combine the two references. Furthermore, the Scop et al. patent also lacks the integral reminder alarm and a reminder alarm timeout configuration which can be configured at a home station, the same deficiencies as Scott. For these reasons it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1 and 11 and their dependent Claims 3 and 13 are patentable over Scott and Scop et al.

Claims 5 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Scott and further in view of US Pat. 5,877,676 (Shankarappa). Shankarappa describes an alerting sequence for a device such as a telephone which varies the alerting sound in accordance with the length of time the alert (ringing telephone) has been sounding. For Scott, a cassette is either late or not late depending on the date, and there is no reason why a variably sounding alarm which audibly indicates the number of seconds the alarm has been sounding should be combined with the Scott device. A cassette does not have to be returned in a matter of seconds from the commencement of an alarm, so there is no need for such an

alarm in combination with Scott. Furthermore, the Shankarappa patent also lacks the integral reminder alarm and a reminder alarm timeout configuration which can be configured at a home station, the same deficiencies as Scott. For these reasons it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1 and 11 and their dependent Claims 5 and 15 are patentable over Scott and Shankarappa.

Claims 8, 9, 18 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Scott and further in view of US Pat. Appl. Pub. 2005/0156740 (Maloney). Maloney describes a storage box for vehicle keys which tracks when keys are taken from and returned to the box, and the length of time that a set of keys is gone. Scott is only interested in timing the time when a cassette is put in his rack until the due date for returning the cassette. He is not interested in knowing when cassettes are taken from or returned to the holder nor the length of time that a cassette is gone from the holder for use in a VCR player. Scott is not interested in complicating his cassette holder with a password or key input or the necessity of entering a password or inserting a key to reset the holder to a default time to return of a cassette. Scott wants his timer to start on the simple placement of a cassette in the holder. Consequently there is no reason for combining the vehicle key storage box of Maloney with the cassette holder of Scott. Furthermore, the Maloney patent also lacks the integral reminder alarm and a reminder alarm timeout configuration which can be configured at a home station, the same deficiencies as Scott. For these reasons it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1 and 11 and their dependent Claims 8, 9, 18 and 19 are patentable over Scott and Maloney.

Claims 10 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Scott and further in view of US Pat. Appl. Pub. 2002/0158751 (Bormaster). Bormaster describes an inventory control system in which inventory items in an

area have RFID tags which are read by a radio. The RFID tags are associated with their specific inventory items by a computer. There is no reason why an RFID inventory control system should be combined with the cassette holder of Scott, as such a system is far too complex and expensive for the simple consumer cassette holder he has in mind. Scott has designed a simple stand-alone holder, not one that needs a radiated field of any sort. Furthermore, the Bormaster patent also lacks the integral reminder alarm and a reminder alarm timeout configuration which can be configured at a home station, the same deficiencies as Scott. For these reasons it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1 and 11 and their dependent Claims 10 and 20 are patentable over Scott and Bormaster.

The art made of record and not relied upon has been reviewed and is not believed to affect the patentability of the claims as amended above.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks it is respectfully submitted that the claims are now clear and definite, that Claims 1-20 are not anticipated by Scott, and that Claims 1-20 are patentable over any combination of Scott, Scop et al., Shankarappa, Maloney, or Bormaster. Accordingly it is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. §112, of Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and of Claims 3, 5, 8-10, 13, 15, and 18-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn.

In light of the foregoing amendment and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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